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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [KREC](#) [AMGT](#) [PTER](#) [ELAB](#) [KTIP](#) [AR](#)  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RAISES PRESS FREEDOM, TIP ISSUES WITH  
ARGENTINE VFM TACCETTI

REF: STATE 104002

Classified By: Ambassador Martinez for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) Summary and introduction: In a very warm, 70-minute meeting November 11, Argentine Vice Foreign Minister Victorio Taccetti welcomed the Ambassador and said he was pleased by news of the U.S. Senate's confirmation of WHA A/S Arturo Valenzuela's nomination. The Ambassador raised trafficking in persons, urging the GOA and offering assistance to show results in prosecuting and convicting traffickers. Taccetti reiterated his reftel arguments against Argentina's ranking on the Tier 2 Watch list and complained about U.S. scorecard diplomacy. The Ambassador noted growing international concerns about perceived assaults on press freedom in Argentina. She also urged MFA intervention to resolve a judicial embargo on the re-export of vehicles owned by Embassy personnel. Taccetti said he was planning to visit Washington and seek meetings with WHA A/S Valenzuela, NSC Director Restrepo, and White House Counsel Gregory Craig. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Joining Taccetti were MFA Under Secretary for Bilateral Affairs, Ambassador Eduardo Villalba; North America Director Antonio Director Tony Trombetta; VFM Advisor Julio Ramon Lascano y Vedia; and senior U.S. Desk Officer Maria Fernanda Canas. The Ambassador was accompanied by Polcouns (notetaker).

Argentine Labor

¶3. (C) Referring to the previous day's strike by subway workers, Taccetti sought to explain resurgent labor strife. He noted that although there were signs of recovery from the global crisis, there also seemed to be a delay in generating jobs, and there was therefore increasing anxiety about job security. But much of Argentina's labor unrest was actually the result of power struggles between unions vying for recognition. In the case of the subway workers, their complaints were aimed not so much at their employer but at the Labor Ministry, as they were seeking to break away from a larger transportation union.

Trafficking in Persons (TIP)

¶4. (C) The Ambassador recalled that in her Washington consultations, she was pleased to learn of USG commitment to strengthening bilateral relations, deepening cooperation, and

fostering greater bilateral trade. In the course of those consultations, she had also learned that Argentina needed to show more progress in prosecuting and convicting traffickers of persons. She undertook to help Argentina get off the Tier 2 Watch List. This elicited from Taccetti a lengthy exposition on the differences between U.S. common law jurisprudence and Argentina's legal framework derived from the Napoleonic Code. He also recalled his September 24 conversation in New York with U/S for Global Affairs Maria Otero, and reiterated the objections he made in reftel, particularly to the unilateral nature of USG scorecards on an issue which would best be addressed multilaterally.

#### Scorecard Diplomacy

15. (C) Taccetti said the USG tendency to scold others had undermined the "3 plus 1" process to bolster counter-terrorist cooperation in the tri-border area with Brazil and Paraguay. He claimed the GOA had several years ago coaxed a reluctant Brazil to let the USG join the dialogue that was already underway between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, but that the USG had focused its participation exclusively on disparaging imagined links between the TBA's long-established Middle Eastern immigrant community and Middle Eastern terrorist organizations without sharing any evidence to back up the allegations.

#### Media Freedom

16. (C) The Ambassador said there was growing concern in

Washington about perceived assaults on freedom of the press in Argentina. Although Argentina's new media legislation and the GOA's approach to a labor union blockade of newspaper printing plants may not have been intended to undermine press freedom, there was growing concern in the international community that the government had undertaken an offensive to rein in independent media. In this context, the way in which the GOA implemented the new media legislation could affect external impressions of Argentina. Taccetti said the new media law was designed to break up a media oligopoly and foster greater competition. He also invited the Ambassador to look through all Argentina's newspapers to observe the many examples of unbridled criticism of the government.

#### POV Re-Export Issue

17. (C) During the meeting and again at its conclusion, the Ambassador raised Embassy concerns about the significant hardship imposed on many personnel due to an Argentine judge's seizure of documents needed to dispose of privately owned vehicles, in clear violation of the Vienna Convention. The Ambassador said she appreciated MFA efforts to get the vehicles released but was concerned that Embassy personnel rotating next year would be the most affected, since the judge was focused on POVs that had been imported in 2007. Taccetti committed to continue pressing for a solution and encouraged the Embassy to follow up with MFA U/S Hernan Orduna and administrative chief Ricardo Fernandez.

#### Washington Trip

18. (C) North America Director Antonio Trombetta said bilateral meetings understandably focused on problems and differences but it was important to bear in mind the excellent bilateral cooperation on key global issues, such as terrorism, non-proliferation, narco-trafficking, the G-20, the Human Rights Council, and the Ambassador added the IAEA and Interpol. Taccetti said he hoped to visit Washington "in two weeks" and meet with WHA A/S Valenzuela, NSC Director Restrepo, and White House Counsel Gregory Craig, with whom the GOA had a longstanding relationship.

MARTINEZ